

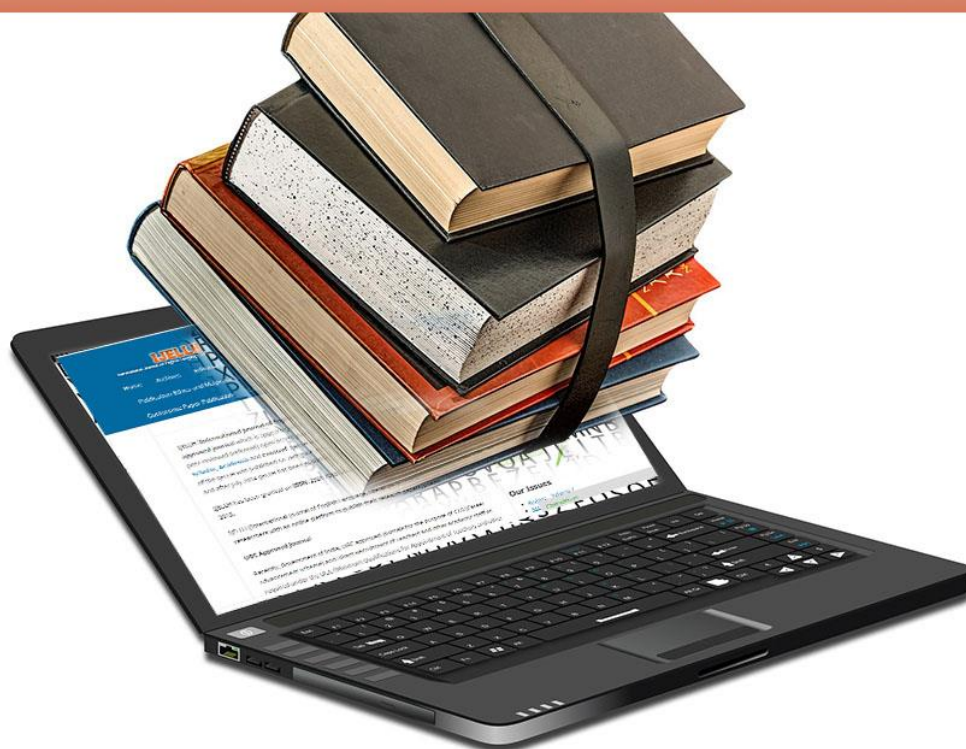
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Devendrabharti Bhagwanbharti Goswami

Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

Email: devendragoswami143@gmail.com

Repetitive as well as Static nature of life as depicted in *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett.

Abstract

The paper sheds light on the nature of life as a repetitive and static phase. The researcher has tried to examine *Waiting for Godot* in the light of its repetitive nature which is at the same time static. In the play events happen again and again, in a circular manner which mirrors our life. The researcher wishes to enlighten through this paper that human life is repetitive, same as the scenes of *Waiting for Godot*, the life of the characters, which proves it to be absurd and pointless.

Key Words: Absurdity, Repetition, Human life.

Introduction

The nineteenth century philosopher, Charles Darwin gave the theory of evolution in which he stated that man has descended from the ape which had an apocalyptic effect on the religious faith of people. Previously people identified man with the Christ but now their faith was shaken. Moreover, Nietzsche announced death of the god. What is more, in twentieth century the world witnessed two major world wars due to which people encountered ghastly death in abundance. All these had a revolutionary effect on the writings that succeeded.

Originally written in French with the title *En attendant Godot* in 1952 and then translated into English by the author himself in 1954, *Waiting for Godot* is one of the major plays written by an Irish avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director, poet, and literary translator, Samuel Beckett. Basically written in two acts with precise and condensed language, the play depicts the inevitability of life as waiting through the characters named Vladimir and Estragon. At a deserted place two tramps Vladimir and Estragon, presented in the play as Didi and Gogo respectively, are projected as waiting for an unspecified person named Mr. Godot who never comes throughout the play. In the course of their unproductive task Didi and Gogo indulge into conversation with each other regarding their daily life with little significance which mirrors human life.

To interrupt their conversation and to be proved a deceptive hope, a small boy comes to inform Didi and Gogo that he has been sent by Mr. Godot to convey the message that he (Mr. Godot) will not come today but he will surely come tomorrow. Within no moments, after passing the message the boy runs away and Didi and Gogo again play the verbal game with each other meaninglessly and they also exchange their caps with no intention at all. In between, two characters, Pozzo and Lucky enter the scene, Pozzo being the master and Lucky being his slave. Didi and Gogo confuse Pozzo being Godot but after sometime they are disillusioned. When asked to think, Luck voices his thinking aloud which goes on and on repeating several words and sentences again and again: “for reasons unknown but time will tell”<sup>1</sup> until his hat is removed from his head. After the departure of Pozzo and Lucky, again that same small boy comes to convey the message that Mr. Godot will not come today but he will surely come tomorrow. The whole play ends without any action per se.

The researcher, examining the play, comes to enlighten that the condition of Vladimir and Estragon is the condition of all human beings on the earth and the life depicted through the play is the life itself on the earth. Unlike proceeding in a linear manner, life gets circulated and repeated each day while taking into consideration the basics of life. Each day the actions of life get repeated creating monotony. Even in the play itself, the actions get repeated. Even the names of main characters, Didi and Gogo (Di Di; Go Go) are also repetition; and they are doing the same activity day after day and that too, in vain.

The fundamental mode of the play is not of revelation, as in classic Western drama, but repetition. Beckett has tried to project the absurdity of human existence devoid of any sense of purpose or meaning in an accidental universe without any answers or certainties. If we compare the original French title *En attendant Godot* which literally means ‘While Waiting for Godot’ with the English title *Waiting for Godot* we encounter Beckett’s art of concentration. The French title is descriptive, implying that the play is about what happens during the period of waiting. Contrary to this, the English title is more ambiguous, implying that the play is about the very act of waiting itself. This would necessarily problematize what or who is being waited for, what is involved in the act of waiting and who is this Godot and why should they wait for Godot? By the English title, our attention is drawn to these questions, bringing the very act of waiting in the focus. The play proves not to be about what happens to characters but about themselves and their act of waiting. Similarly, the subject of the play is not Godot but waiting.

Beckett depicts the act of waiting as an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition. Throughout their lives, human beings, like Didi and Gogo, always wait for something, and Godot simply represents the objective of their waiting- an event, a thing, a

person or even death. What is more, it is in the act of waiting that one experiences the flow of time in its purest form. If one is active, one tends to forget the passage of time. But if one is passively waiting, one is confronted with the basic problem of 'Being' - the problem of the nature of the self (Who am I?). Now the nature of the self, according to the central tenet of existential philosophy (existence precedes essence) is difficult to be perceived as the self is in constant flux and therefore ever outside one's grasp. As a result, the nature of the self can only be apprehended as a retrospective hypothesis. As the individual self is always in a constant process of change through time, one is, at no single moment in his/her life, identical with his or her self. This is called impermanence of human personality in time: at each point in time one's self is a distinct and different entity. The self is always elusive, split into the perceiver and the perceived, ever changing through time, from moment to moment. As a result, according to Beckettian belief, one is disappointed at the futility of what is called attainment, i.e. the identification of the subject with the object of his/her desire. Since the subject is in constant flux, such attainment can only be temporary and so unsatisfactory, leaving the subject frustrated, looking forward to the possibility of new attainment and so on ad infinitum.

Applying this in the context of the play, then Godot becomes the object of desire for Didi and Gogo. But owing to the impossibility of absolute attainment, Godot would always be beyond their reach. One should note here that the messenger-boy fails to recognize the pair from day to day. Even Vladimir is addressed by this boy as Mr. Albert to which he responds positively. The same boy appears in both the acts and yet he does not recognize them and he insists that this is the first time that he has acted as Godot's messenger. Towards the end of the play, when the boy is leaving, Vladimir tries to impress upon him: **"You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me tomorrow that you never saw me."**<sup>2</sup> The boy leaves without any

reply and we as a reader are sure that if he reappears, he will again fail to recognize them. Thus in the context of the play waiting is shown as an experience of time, which is in constant change. And yet, as nothing really happens, that change is itself an illusion. As Beckett believes, **“The more things change, the more they remain the same.”**<sup>3</sup> Still Didi and Gogo live in hope; they wait for Godot. But their hopes are shown as baseless as the play stresses the uncertainty of the appointment with Godot, Godot’s unreliability and irrationality. In this way, the act of waiting for Godot is shown as essentially inevitable but also absurd.

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